Left Caucus newsletter

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NDP leaders retreat from anti-war policy

By Gord Doctorow
Oriole

When, at the end of 1987, the heads of the United States and the Soviet Union signed an agreement to dismantle intermediate range (INF) nuclear weapons, the peoples of the world collectively heaved a sigh of relief. For the first time in many years, ordinary people were beginning to shake off the frightening fatalism of an inevitable nuclear confrontation. The anti-war movements gained a new momentum. Public discussion

has turned not only to making deeper inroads to reduce all types of nuclear arsenals but also in reducing conventional arms. Soviet leader Gorbachev's Christmas television message to the American people, which was broadcast around the world, met this new sense of optimism by calling for the reduction of conventional armaments. His words are being matched by significant actions. More recently, he announced his government's intention to withdraw Soviet troops from Afghanistan by mid-May.

Are these not compelling signs for pursuing new peace initiatives by concentrating on disarmament, one may rationally think. But while all this was taking place, the Mulroney government, fortified by the rhetoric of the cold war, presented its "Defence" White Paper last June without a hint of recognition of the new world situation. On the contrary, its White Paper thrust Canada headlong into the forefront of a renewed arms drive. Defence Minister Perrin Beatty proposed in this paper that this country of 24 million accept a military budget of $183 billion over the next 15 years. And what did he offer up to the Canadian people who are just barely starting to experience a renewed hope for the future of this planet? Some $15 billion for 12 nuclear submarines, six new frigates, 35 marine helicopters, 1,200 trucks, tanks, guns, planes, bombs and other lethal goodies that a Rambo-in-charge may wish. No longer will the NORAD surveillance system rely solely on electronic means in the inaccessible areas of the northern Arctic -- military personnel in nuclear submarines will occupy themselves in a state of military preparedness.

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Rally to ONDP Left Caucus Conference on March 19

By Bill Clinton
Oriole

The 1988 Left Caucus conference is approaching. All NDP members are welcome to attend and to use the opportunity to discuss tasks and perspectives for the coming year and to elect a new Steering Committee.

The conference will take place on March 19 at 519 Church St. Registration will be at 9:00 and will cost $15 ($8 for the underemployed).

The fee includes lunch and the cost of registration for the Left Caucus Newsletter for 1988-89. Speakers will include Dan Heap, delivering a critique on the Defence White Paper, trade unionist Stan Gray on Worker's Health and Safety, Toronto school board trustee Olivia Chow and Ont. Teachers' Federation Vice-President Malcolm Buchanan who will talk on shaping the future NDP education policy, and Canadian Auto Workers' researcher Sam Gindon leading a workshop on a socialist approach to free trade. The lunch-time workshops will be on Education, Free Trade, Women's Reproductive Rights and Violence Against Women and Children.

The 'Last Debate' on Free Trade

By Harry Kopyto
Oakwood

The Canada-U.S. free trade debate is taking place as Canada's economy has become even more integrated with that of the U.S than ever before.

As Gary Teeple points out in his article, *North American Free Trade: The Last Debate* (**Our Generation, 1987**), "Given the degree of interlocking capital and fusion of the U.S. and Canadian economies, they are indistinguishable." Teeple summarizes the definitive character of this process by pronouncing that this is "the last debate," the final elimination of the last vestiges of Canada's sovereignty over its economy.

Seventy-eight per cent of Canadian exports go the U.S., up from 68% a decade ago. Well over half of all trade takes place between U.S. corporations and their branch-plant Canadian subsidiaries, thereby accelerating the branch plant nature of the Canadian economy.

In reality free trade is already a fact of life dictated by U.S. corporations who own or control the commanding heights of the Canadian economy. The Mulroney-Reagan deal is designed to complete the process of full integration by eliminating all tariffs and most other

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No independence without socialism and democratic control of the economy

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trade barriers by 1999.

Such integration is inevitable within the confines of the present social system. The capitalist market has transformed Canada into a branch-plant economy. By removing limits on U.S. capital's activities in the financial institutions and by creating a North American energy pool, the Mulroney government is leaving Canada wide open to U.S. takeovers of the last bastions of the Canadian economy.

Many Canadians, apprehensive about the economic outlook for the future and seeking to avert pressures on our economy by U.S. trade barriers, are being told by Big Business and its government that an agreement must be signed now, at all cost, or Canadians will forever suffer.

The Liberal Party is split on the issue with Liberal Party Big Business interests lining up with the rest of its class in promoting free trade. Leader John Turner has adopted a strident nationalism with militant overtones -- ironic for a leader of a party which has traditionally aided and abetted continentalism. He is seeking to tap into the broad fears of Canadians that the free trade agreement would threaten the advanced social security schemes and put Canadian sovereignty on the line. By upstaging the NDP in its coalition with the trade union movement against free trade, even characterizing the free trade deal as a "sell-out", Turner seeks to revitalize his party's image and raise its profile. With the NDP failing to pose its own perspective and vision against Mulroney's appeal, the Liberals appear to be succeeding.

The debate, however, seems to be over before it has really begun. It is now only months before U.S. authorities sign their names to an agreement already approved in principle by the governments of both countries. In Canada, the main poltical forces have already taken sides -- the business elite and Tories in favor of free trade, labor and the NDP along with the Liberal leadership against.

Such a political delineation holds treacherous dangers for the NDP, as the current decline in the NDP's standing in the polls confirms. By advocating a nationalist vision of Canada devoid of socialist content, the NDP leadership is rapidly reducing its profile to that of a second, weaker Liberal party, readily eclipsed in the battle between the major protagonists.

There is a solution. The NDP could speak out boldly with its own message -- **FOR AN INDEPENDENT CANADA THROUGH SOCIALISM**. A programmatic intervention in the free trade debate around this concept will give us a clear focus of our own, and build the NDP as the real alternative against continentalism.

The imperialist nature of U.S. capitalism -- in Vietnam, in Nicaragua and in Grenada -- continues to fuel a powerful anti-U.S. imperialist sentiment in Canada. The genuine yearnings of Canadians to be masters in their own home can only be realized by projecting the expropriation of the U.S. megacorporations which dominate Canada's economy.

The class nature of the movement against free trade emphasizes the dynamic to the left inherent in the struggle. The writing is on the wall for the NDP: Turn Left -- or go downhill.

Yet the NDP leadership, intoxicated by the prospect of sharing power to the point of seeking respectability at all costs, mimics the Liberals with its own brand of chauvinistic nationalism, stripped of any remaining vestiges of socialism, as if the NDP's socialist heritage were the obstacle to electoral success. The drift of the NDP leadership to the right in the free trade debate can only act to the NDP's disadvantage in an alliance in which the NDP will remain a junior partner, a somewhat blurred reflection of the Liberals. The lessons of the last election in Ontario remain unabsorbed by the leadership of the party.

But the NDP membership have spoken on the issues the leadership is seeking to submerge. The 1985 federal NDP convention decisively rejected the hodge-podge of economic proposals that NDP finance critic Steven Langdon now unveils as the leadership's contribution to the free trade debate. At that time, the delegates rejected Langdon's proposals and followed the Left Caucus lead in calling for a policy that give public ownership more emphasis.

The jettisoning of party policies by the leadership leaves the party rudderless, buffeted by opportunist pressures. Without a clear and distinct program based on the democratic decisions of the membership after debate at conventions, the party loses any ability to play a leading role in the discussion.

The party has developed some important policy positions on the major questions raised in the debate. On the question of political sovereignty, party policy calls for withdrawal from the U.S.-imperialist alliances of NATO and NORAD. On the question of economic sovereignty, the party policy is to extend public ownership including the nationalization of a major bank. As a solution to structural deformities and unemployment, the party stands against privatization, and the **Left Caucus** has posed the need to take over the branch plants and for economic planning and workers' control.

The NDP can retake the initiative in the debate. Not since the days of the Waffle has the NDP had such an opportunity to intervene in the public debate with the following concepts and demands:

*No to free trade; for an independent and socialist Canada! There can be no independence without socialism. That is the message that the NDP must bring to the people of Canada.
*No to branch plant closures; public ownership and workers' democratic control of branch plant industries unable to maintain their operations!
*No to privatization; public ownership and worker-controlled administration of vital areas of economic activity, including day care, the post office, natural resources and transportation!
*For a shorter work week as the most effective answer to structural unemployment!

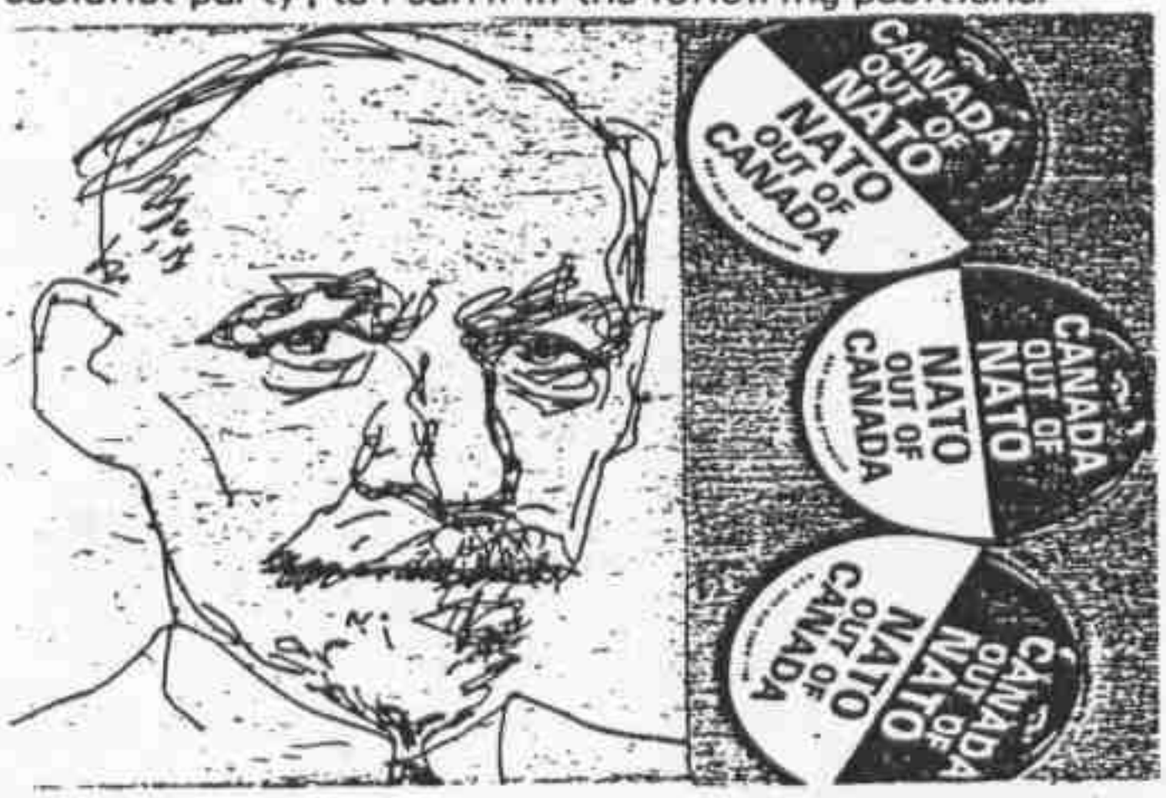
Socialist education policy for the NDP

By Manfred Netzel
Parkdale

One of the major weaknesses shown by the ONDP during the 1987 provincial election campaign was the absence of an articulated education policy. One caucus insider tried to justify the decision to not include education issues in the campaign strategy stating that it had been "a big issue already, so it couldn't be one this time."

If the December 1987 Provincial Council was any indication, many Party activists felt that the lack of an education platform was a serious error of strategy and principle which cannot be allowed to happen again.

Education of children, adolescents and adults is a basic right for all Canadians; as such it is the *sole* responsibility of the *state* to provide the necessary funding, staffing and curricula to meet its social obligation in the area of public education. It is, therefore, incumbent upon the ONDP, or any true socialist party, to reaffirm the following positions:



J.S. Woodsworth
militant pacifist
1874-1942

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*provincial financing of a public education system at a level sufficient (i.e. minimum 60%) to meet program and student needs.
*unequivocal opposition to public funding of any private or denominational education systems, which act to further fragment society along religious or socio-economic lines.
*development of curricula and facilities which identify and promote working class issues and needs (reflecting the majority of school attendees).
*development of administrative guidelines for local boards of education which encourage greater creativity, initiative and positive attitudes by students, teachers and school administrators.

At this time, it might be useful to acknowledge the obvious weaknesses and pitfalls of the current education system. The majority of school age attendees are "falling through the cracks" for a variety of reasons -- inadequate programs for non-academic students, "streaming" of immigrant and working-class students into technical/vocational programs, streamming girls out of maths and sciences, lack of adult literacy programs.

The results of these "cracks" are obvious to everyone: a 35-40% drop-out rate in secondary schools, juvenile crime and a large number of functionally illiterate and/or innumerate school graduates.

In order to address these problems, the ONDP must adopt the following positions:
*a strong commitment to greater parental involvement in both the elementary and secondary school environments.
*opposition to student "streaming" and curricula which lead to discrimination based on sex, race or economic class.
*strong support for apprenticeship training of non-academic secondary and post-secondary students.
*clear opposition to curricular and/or educational thrusts such as "Junior Achievement" or "Adopt-a-school", which serve to reinforce capitalist ideology.
*encouragement of existing literacy and heritage language progrmas which are most beneficial for working-class students.
Finally, the future successes of any public education system in Ontario and Canada must be drawn from a basic socialist assumption that education is a tool used for achieving genuine equal opportunity for the majority of students who suffer unfair discrimination. To that end, socialists should support and affirm these positions, some of which are already existing ONDP policy.
*opposition to any provincial education financing scheme based exclusively upon the municipal property tax or through the pooling of municipal commercial or industrial assessments.
*strong opposition to any form of voucher education.
*the gradual reduction and/or elimination of post-secondary tuition fees.
*encouragement of a more *generalist* education at the post-secondary level, to allow greater mobility, integration and adaptability of the learner in the work force, and thus avoid possible dislocation.
*strong reaffirmation of support for a public, non-denominational school system.

Poll reveals rising support for socialism

On three different occasions in the course of the recent Ontario provincial elections, the daily press reported that Ontario NDP leader Bob Rae either evaded answering or refused to answer the simple question as to whether he is a socialist. This is all the more inexplicable as Rae's companion CAW's Bob White, gave the matter-of-fact answer -- "Of course."

As if following up on this incident, Toronto Star reporter Leonard Shifrin writes in his column of August 3 that "Whatever the word socialism means to Canadians today, a major change is taking place in how they feel about it."

"In 1983 the proportion of Canadians who thought the country should move towards socialism stood at 17 per cent, says Gallup. In 1984, it was 20 per cent. Now it is 28 per cent. Meanwhile, opposition to socialism dropped from 55 per cent in 1983 to 46 per cent in 1984 and is now down to 40 per cent."

Shifrin does not provide the basis for his comments on this fluctuating opinion about socialism.

Meech Lake Accord subverts rights

By Lois Bedard
High Park-Swansea

New Democrats need to be involved in the movement to amend the Meech Lake Accord -- the Canadian Constitution Amendment Act (June 3, 1987). Within the next three years, in all provinces but Quebec, Saskatchewan and Alberta, which have already voted their blanket support, we must mobilize to force amendments to those sections that threaten to limit self-determination and equality.

What are the areas of concern?

1. The Constitutional Amendment Act fails to guarantee the rights of women under and before the law -- a concession fought for and won in 1981 in the Charter of Rights and Freedoms. The Supreme Court, on June 25, 1987, ruled that the Charter could not be used to invalidate other provisions of the Constitution. Canadian women should not have to mount an extensive ERA struggle. Canada wants women's equality defined and entrenched in the Constitutional Amendment Act of 1987.

2. Aboriginal rights of the Native people, Inuit and Metis must be entrenched.

3. The Mulroney government and the Quebec Liberals have signed the 1987 Constitutional Amendment which does not guarantee Quebec's rights as a nation -- the same omission that kept Quebec from signing the Constitutional Amendments of 1982. What did Quebec get? "Linguistic duality" and recognition of a "distinct society"! What effect these two new principles of interpretation will have on the Constitution and the Charter of Rights and Freedom is unknown until the Supreme Court of Canada rules on a case brought to litigation.

4. By requiring unanimous consent of the provinces before a new province (e.g. the Yukon and/or the Northern Territories) can join Canada, the Act erects a formidable barrier. It prohibits the right of self-determination of the people inhabiting one third of Canada's northern land mass. In whose interest is Canada operating -- the U.S.-owned development corporations?

5. Just under half of the federal budget funds for 1986-87 went to the provinces and individuals to help subsidize Canada's major national programs such as medicare, post-secondary education, Family Allowance, Old Age Security and a number of national and regional economic development programs. Section 7 of the Constitutional Amendment Act governing federal-provincial negotiations empowers provincial governments to opt out of national programs and still receive transfer funds. So Canadian citizens will no longer be entitled to uniform, universal, federally funded social services. This means new social programs introduced after 1990 for Canadian citizens may not be universal.

6. Ian Waddell (NDP MP, Vancouver Kingsway), described the Meech Lake Accord as "a radical decentralization" because it gives significant powers over Senate and Supreme Court appointments to the provinces making the Senate a provincially controlled body and the Supreme Court a protector of narrow provincial interests. Ian Waddell and Audrey McLaughlin (NDP MP, Yukon), out of 30 NDP MPs, voted against the Meech Lake Accord in the House of Commons. Of course, it should be recalled that the NDP has a long-standing policy of principle that calls for the abolition of the Senate -- not its reform.

Although Howard Pawley, Premier of Manitoba signed the Meech Lake Accord, it is reported that, incensed by the Free Trade Pact, he is planning to hold an unrestricted free discussion and vote in the Manitoba Legislature on acceptance or rejection of the Meech Lake Accord. This pattern should be followed in each of the provinces that still have to decide whether to accept or reject the Accord.

Socialists know that legislatures and the judiciary do not empower citizens' self-determination. The power for self-determination lies in our united action to popularize our demands with our brothers and sisters in our unions and riding associations.

Clear names of victims of Stalinism

As a supplement to our June 1987 Left Caucus *Newsletter* we published an appeal that had been issued in England by the Moscow Trials Campaign. It was addressed to the Soviet government asking it to re-examine the cases of the victims of the infamous Moscow Show Trials of 1936-38, expressing confidence that the accused will be shown to have been innocent, and urging they immediately be rehabilitated, their honor restored, their families compensated and their graves marked.

One of our supporters, Ross Dowson, circulated copies of the appeal among prominent activists on the Canadian Left, asking them to signify their support by sending their signatures to his address at 1809-40 Homewood Ave., Toronto M4Y 2K2. To date, some 43 well-known Canadians, listed below, have endorsed the appeal:

Bruce Allen, Andre Bekerman, Walter Belyea, Domenico Binetti, Carl Birchard, Hans Blumenfeld, John Boyd, Ruth Bullock, Varda Burstyn, Michael Cassidy MP, Sheila Delany, Gord Doctorow, Ross Dowson, Marv Gandall, Cy Gonick, Gerry Hunius, David Joffe, G.S. Kealey, Harry Kopyto, George Martell, David McNally, Joe Meslin, Francois Moreau, Vernel Olson, Leo Panitch, Norman Penner, Jim Pringle, Rilt Prinsep, Judy Rebick, Satu Repo, Wayne Roberts, Lukin Robinson, Dimitri Roussopoulos, Clayton Ruby, Stuart Russell, Rick Salutin, Chris Schenk, William Spira, Donald Swartz, Jerry Szach, Jesse Vorst, Barry Weisleder, Reg Whitaker.

Supporters elsewhere across the globe have transformed this campaign into an international one of remarkable significance. For an expanded list, see *International Viewpoint* Nov. 9, 1987. The list of supporters in the United States is only now expanding and already includes such notables as Norman Mailer, Bertell Ollman, Annette Rubinstein, Paul Sweezy, Pete Seeger, Howard Zinn and others. See *International Viewpoint* Feb. 8, 1988.

Copies of *International Viewpoint* can be purchased in Toronto: Lichtman's Newsstands, SCM Books, DEC Books, and Book City locations; in Ottawa: Globe Magazines, Mags and Fags.

Victory for women's right to choose movement

By Ross Dowson
St. George-St. David

When the judges of the Supreme Court of Canada upheld by a decisive majority all the basic arguments of the Right to Choose movement in its 20-years struggle to remove abortion from the Criminal Code in the Morgentaler case, ruling that the legislation threatened the health of women by causing arbitrary delays and unfair disparities in access to abortion across the country, there was widespread jubiliation. But there was no joy in the ranks of the federal government. Over the past year, they have been pillars of law and order in using their authority to implement laws under threat of harsh penalties for noncompliance, to drive striking postal workers back on the job, and violate the basic democratic right of the railway workers to strike.

But not when it came to dealing with the BC premier's defiance of the Supreme Court . By their silence in the face of BC Premier Vander Zalm's arrogant challenge that his government will no longer fund abortion unless a woman's life was at peril, the federal govenment has emboldened other provincial governments to violate the court's ruling. Only Ontario and Manitoba have agreed to finance all aboritons in their jurisdictions whether in hospitals, clinics or doctors' offices.

The NDP through MP and former party president Marion Dewar has urged the government to immediately stop all federal funds going to provinces that refuse to follow the Supreme Court judgment and thereby violate the principle of universality in the Health Act.

On Feb. 9, Justice Minister Hnatyshyn broke his silence to announce that he will be introducing another, a new abortion law -- ominous news indeed in the light of comments from prominent Tory sources about the rights not of the woman who bears it , but of the foetus which, if carried through to term becomes a child and the responsibility of the mother to raise and care for regardless of her circumstances. CARAL one of the key forces in the struggle against the old law has declared that it will fight all laws dealing with abortion through the courts and in popular demonstrations.

Withdraw from NATO/NORAD alliance

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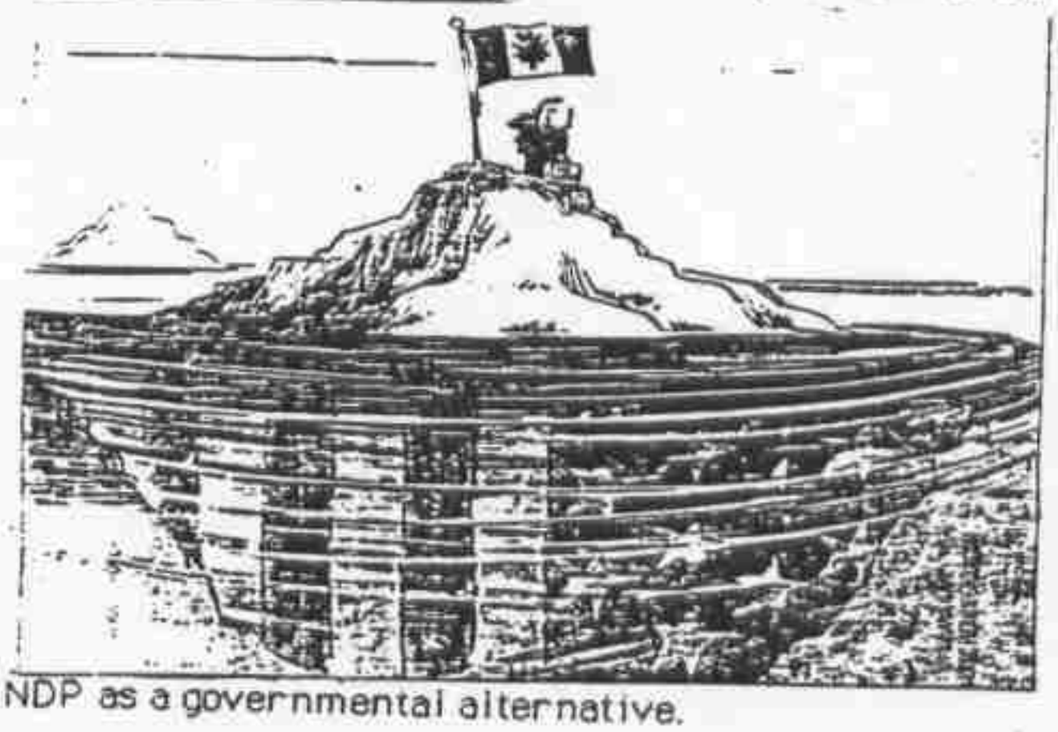
In the face of this absurd militarism of the Tories, anti-war activists were somewhat taken aback by the response of the Broadbent leadership in the form of its own defence paper (*CANADIAN SOVEREIGNTY, SECURITY AND DEFENCE: A New Democratic Response to the Defence White Paper*). The federal New Democrats' response was presented by defence critic Derek Blackburn. An article (by freelance writer Tom Monto) in the Oct. 1987 issue of *Alberta's New Democrat,* correctly attacked it as a call for "larger and more expensive armed forces to defend against a perceived Soviet threat." Blackburn's *Response* marks an outrageous turn to the right from the CCF-NDP's longstanding anti-war tradition, which entitled the NDP to call itself the Anti-War Party of Canada. Blackburn proposes to re-deploy Canada's European NATO forces in Canada along with CF-18 aircraft (ostensibly to deter Soviet attacks on the United States). He wants to equip them with upgraded helicopters, naval destroyers and diesel-powered submarines. He wants to increase the militarization of the Arctic at a time that the Nordic nations and the Soviet Union are proposing the very opposite course.

This view is an egregious violation of the anti-war tradition that dates back to the early days of the CCF. The CCF's most eminent spokesperson and founding leader, J.S. Woodsworth, rebutted the attitude of Blackburn back in 1937 serves as an adequate response: "Canada does not stand in any immediate danger. The U.S. ... our only powerful neighbor ... will not make any military attack upon us. Those who rely on military force may rest assured that the U.S. would resist outside aggression upon us for her own sake. Those who say we ought not to be under any obligation to the U.S. [should understand that] if we are going to 'talk up' to the U.S., we ought to be prepared to have a national defence program at least as large as that of the U.S. Surely, that is an absolute absurdity."

Of course, in the nuclear age, the concept of conventional weapons as a deterrent is mere posturing. Canada is caught between the two nuclear giants and is considered to be under the U.S. nuclear umbrella regardless of our own desires. The *Response* is without logical foundation.

On the other hand, the *Response* calls for Canadian withdrawal from the military-imperialist alliances of NATO and NORAD. Nonetheless, the party leadership has recently retreated publicly from this many times sustained convention policy position. The Federal Party president's subsequent ruling that the leadership could not overturn this policy could not undo the real damage: the public got the message that the leadership doesn't really support this policy. Broadbent and Blackburn ran before the tirades of the pundits of the capitalist press and left the party without a credible position at a favorable moment to win public sympathy to the party's anti-war policy. The leadership has failed to undertake the elementary task of educating about the party's antiwar policy in order to win over the growing numbers of Canadians who are starting to look to the NDP as a governmental alternative.



The *Response* , like Beatty's White Paper, views the defence of Canadian territory and sovereignty mostly from the point of view that Soviet ICBM's and the Soviet northern fleet are the main threat. In the face of the U.S. government's refusal to recognize Canadian sovereignty in the Arctic, while the Soviet Union does, and the federal Tories' weak-kneed acquiescence to the undeclared presence of U.S. nuclear subs in the

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Northwest Passage, Blackburn fails to recognize where the real threat to Canadian sovereignty lies. His proposal to militarize Canada's coastal waters cannot accomplish what a political act along the lines of New Zealand's Labor government was able to achieve -- a nuclear weapons free zone. It is true that the *Response* calls for a non-nuclear Canada, but as Monto points out, "it does not explicitly call for a ban on storage or transit of nuclear weapons in Canada." In fact, Blackburn was reported as publicly assuring that U.S. nuclear subs would have access to Canadian harbors for emergency purposes.

This is typical of the tension within the *Response*. While arguing for an all-Canadian North Warning System to replace the DEW line, it hastens to reassure that strategic information will be passed to the same U.S. government which is developing a destabilizing Star Wars system that encourages an emphasis on first-strike nuclear capability, and which is extending this to an ADI system which links surveillance to the launching of air-based missile systems. The Tories, of course, approve of this integration as they do all other forms of continental integration, but the NDP policy should not be a shadow version of the same policy. The NDP leadership is attempting an impossible balancing act: arguing for a pullout from the military alliances on the grounds of practicality and good economic sense while attempting to assuage the misgivings of the U.S. leadership and pro-U.S. prejudice in a segment of Canadian public opinion with professions of a non-neutralist, pro-U.S. approach in emergency situations. But their own arguments against NATO defeat this point of view. If Canada's presence in NATO is largely symbolic and without military significance, then as the New Zealand example shows, it is a political question. And the search for genuine peace and disarmament requires bold political initiatives.

It is also a social and class issue. J.S. Woodsworth argued against Canadian citizens making profits out of supply war munitions, which, as Monto points out, is in "stark contrast to Blackburn's *Response*, whose defence spending recommendations would create a huge military-industrial complex." Woodsworth's 1937 motion to the House of Commons stated that the Canadian government should make every effort to discover and remove the causes of international friction and social injustice. The socialist view of war is that it is fundamentally driven by capitalism's desire to extend the field for profits. Socialism counterposes the alternative of a cooperative commonwealth based on production for use to satisfy the real social needs of the people. It is here that the *Response* reveals its greatest failing. It proposes the absurd notion of non-nuclear rearming of Canada to defend its land mass in the age of nuclear weaponry which must perforce sacrifice social programs to this expensive priority.

The alarming retreat of the party leadership has met with resistance within the party. For example, the Foreign Policy Committee of the Spadina NDP, including Dan Heap MP, has written a trenchant criticism of the *Response*, addressed to the party's International Affairs Committee. It offers that "the Party must develop a coherent platform of policies" that stress international security through development assistance to "Third World" countries emphasizing the solidarity struggles and eschewing military preparedness geared to the playing out of the East-West conflict. Furthermore, they argue that the party must educate the populace to understand that NDP priorities are not isolationist, but internationalist and promising real security on a world basis. Arguments are made to show that military armaments are the real source of insecurity and that NATO and NORAD, in particular, destabilize the world with their doctrine of first-strike capability. Furthermore, these U.S.-dominated alliances subordinate Canada's sovereignty while providing no real forum for Canada to influence policy.

The NDP parliamentary caucus should inspire the Canadian people's yearning for peace and prosperity by voting against the Tories' military budget.

Left Caucus newsletter

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Vote labour to power in Ottawa

By Harry Kopyto
St. Paul's

The NDP electoral campaign is in a state of severe crisis. Poll after poll has revealed that the party which a mere few weeks earlier stood number one in popularity has now slipped to third place -- low 20% range in the latest polls and still weakening. The architects of the NDP electoral strategy have left us rudderless in the midst of what should have been the most propitious breakthrough for labor politics on Canada in decades. Never has the NDP been so popular before an election, the Liberals so moribund, and the Conservatives so discredited all at the same time. How did the NDP blow it?

'... Care to browse, Sir?'

First and foremost the campaign was Broadbent-personality-oriented, insipid and devoid of significant political content because of its lack of a fundamentally different vision of a future society. Worse, the party has emerged in public perception as the party of opportunism, fudging on its program to win votes.

Broadbent's statement that "I don't rule out a coalition with Liberals; I don't rule out a coalition with the Tories" threw the campaign off from the start. It set back the NDP's historic drive to form a labor government in Ottawa, and undermined its credibility on the free trade issue by offering to unite with the big business, continentalist parties to govern the country together.

The party leadership should have entered the election campaign proud of its program and prepared to consolidate its support by lessening superficial anxiety to

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NDP is the only choice for women

By Lois Bedard
High Park-Swansea

Women owe it to themselves and to Canada to vote for the only party that has consistently led and supported all progressive legislation affecting women's equality. Women are 52% of the population and more women vote than men. Statistics show that women tend to vote in greater numbers than men for social equality issues. To win women's equality is to work to free men from their chauvinistic chains. Thus a great many women vote for the New Democratic Party that began the fight against the Mulroney Free Trade Deal in Parliament and has continued to fight it along side the women's movement and labor on the hustings today.

The Liberals and Conservatives understand the problems. Ontario Liberal cabinet minister Chaviva Hosek knows the women's movement and even gave high praise to the NDP when she was president of the Na-

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NFLD. Innu protest NATO air base

By Bill Clinton
Oriole

On October 4, 150 Mantagnais-Naskapi Natives (also known as Innu) were arrested for peacefully occupying the main runway at Canadian Forces Base Goose Bay, in Labrador. They were charged by the RCMP with "mischief" and imprisoned in the penitentiary in St. John's Newfoundland.

The Innu's crime was their protest against the low-level flight of military planes from the base illegally sited on Innu land. The federal government, though it recgonized this fact in 1978, has stalled proceedings in deference to its military-industrial priorities and arrogantly refuses to negotiate with the Innu. The reason for this is the importance it attaches to the base. Goose Bay was specifically chosen as a site for the training of NATO pilots because the surrounding terrain closely resembles certain key areas of the Soviet Union. NATO pilots are being trained in low-level flying so they can avoid Soviet radar systems and more easily penetrate Soviet defences, Realizing the marketable qualities of such a training area. the federal government puts great store in it. They have already rented it out to the armed forces of Britain, West Germany and the Netherlands. Belgium and Italy are two more prospective customers the government is cur-

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Vote labour to power in Ottawa

Continued from page 2
its anti-NATO position to its growing base of support by exposing the true nature of these military alliances. Instead, the NDP leadership chose to jettison the party's historical anti-war position by a manoeuvre behind the backs of the membership. It ended up imitating the Tory commitment of Canada to the world-wide arms drive. In its *Report on Common Security*, adopted by the federal council this past spring, the party leadership revised the party's position of Canadian withdrawal from NATO to an indefinite time in the future dependent upon the permission of fellow NATO members. Moreover, the *Report* called for a home-grown arms industry which Brian Mulroney has hypocritically estimated would exceed the Tory's present program for military expansion by two billion dollars. Most astounding, however, is the federal leadership's call for the replacement of the U.S.-dominated military alliance of NORAD instead of its abolition.

Even on Quebec Broadbent has undermined NDP prospects by opposing advocacy by the Quebec NDP of the defence of francophone rights. He identified with efforts to maintain federal funds to promote English language rights and schools in Quebec in the face of Quebec leader Michael Agnaieff's assertion that "you would have to be blind not to see that the only language threatened in Canada and in Quebec is French."

The shift to the right has failed to convince new supporters and alienated the old ones. As the Toronto Globe and Mail wrote October 22, "the image-makers have placed Ed Broadbent into a dark banker's suit. You never hear the word 'socialist' from Mr. Broadbent or any reference to take over the commanding heights of the economy". Echoing this theme the Toronto Star reported September 20 that Broadbent and his staff "know how to stay out of the news" and Broadbent "succeeded in convincing some of his colleagues to forsake or shelve some of the more radical elements of their agendas".

This strategy has gone haywire. Mid-term polls showed Mulroney has already exceeded the NDP issueless leader in popularity.

The Broadbent leadership first compounded the difficulty by muting the party's full program in favor of concentrating on opposition to the free-trade pact. This manoeuvre, however, played into the hands of the Liberals who projected a vision of Canada as a vigorous bourgeois nationalist state. This accounts for the dramatic recoup by the Liberal leader who a mere week or two earlier was a subject of virulent attack by the media and prematurely counted out of the electoral race by an overenthusiastic Broadbent who concentrated his opposition initially on the Tories. Even Brian Mulroney projects a future vision of continental integration to Canadians so naive as to believe that it would somehow increase our standard of living or the marketability of our commodities.

Broadbent alone stands without a clear vision of the future, that is, as a reformist defender of the status quo, unable to project the path towards an independent, socialist Canada. Broadbent sounded like an echo of John Turner who has undercut the NDP through his own demagogic attack on continental integration and the adoption of a progressive program of reforms indistinguishable from that of the NDP. Broadbent has adapted to pressures from groups like the Toronto Star which cunningly advocates a *deja vu* of the disastrous Peterson/Rae alliance which ruled Ontario for two years. Such illusions have even spread to writers in *Canadian Dimension*, who view the free trade pact as being of such historical importance that they call for support of whatever party, regardless of its class basis, is best able to defeat the government. On the other hand, Broadbent's recent announcement of the demise of the free trade pact as a certainty is not only premature and improbable but once again gives the Liberals the initiative on an issue a majority of Canadians consider to be most important.

Should the NDP leadership, even in the dying week or two of its campaign shift to the left, defending its principles and stand by its program, there would be a possibility of stopping the bleeding of the party. In an election campaign characterized by an unstable and searching electorate a sharp turn to the left can win back the support shown for the NDP earlier in the polls for approximately two years. Now, more than ever before, the NDP must unfurl its banner against the prospect of integrated corporate North America, with its tendency to increasing concentration and recession, to a Canada liberated from the military-industrial complex. This calls for immediate withdrawal from NATO and NORAD, equality for women, freedom of choice, nationalization of a major bank and expropriation of runaway American industries.

These demands, however, must be tied to a socialist vision of Canada with a planned economy designed to meet the interests of working people. Instead of declaring free trade a dead issue, already won, Broadbent should be attacking the leader of the Liberal Party which oversaw Canada's continental integration to the point where 80% of U.S.-Canadian trade is aready "free". Canada's own capitalist class has aided the penetration fo U.S. capital into Canada, in accordance with irreversible economic forces and laws, an inevitable result stemming from Canada's contiguous existence with the most powerful capitalist country in the world. A fearful and uncertain Canadian electorate will not be inspired by talk of a caring father figure or fair mindedness when searching for fundamental answers. Without any socialist vision to counter the concerns that Canadians have about "free trade", Broadbent won the support of only one out of ten viewers on the mid-election television leadership debates.

Since the mid-election TV debate, when Turner pushed the election to the left with his attack on Muroney's "sell-out of Canada" to the "multinational corporations", the NDP has been left with the choice of becoming a "me-too" party associated with the status quo or of putting forward our vision of the future of Canada. A socialist Canada will be fully independent of the U.S. war machine, will end Canada's role as a prison-house of nations, will create industrial jobs as part of a strategy based on public repatriation of our natural resources, will place working people at the levers of power and will use public ownership to end our economic marginalization.

Will the NDP stand up for socialism when anti-communist feeling is declining, the movements of so

Continued on page 5

NDP is the only choice for women

Continued from page 1

tional Action Committee on the Status of Women, but has developed obligations to her corporate backers. The NDP and its precursor the CCF, since the days of Canada's and the CCF's first woman parliamentarian, Agnes McPhail, have led the struggle together with working men and women.

Former NDP MP Pauline Jewitt carried a heroic battle in the Commons for an independent foreign policy for Canada against Cruise Missiles, NATO and NORAD, and against nuclear powered subs for Canada.

Former NDP MLA Rosemary Brown continues to fight for socialist policies against the "feminization of poverty". This means no to the federal Tories' and Ontario Liberals' new regressive sales taxes and a resounding yes to indexed pensions for Canadians at work and on OAS.

Evelyn Gigantes, NDP, led the struggle in the Ontario legislature for human rights on sexual orientation. NDP MP Marion Dewar took the cross-Canada initiative when she was mayor of Ottawa to establish the Municipal Referendum for nuclear free cities. She now continues the struggle for reproductive rights and against new laws restricting a woman's right to an abortion. Audrey McLaughain campaigned and won her seat in the Yukon by opposing the Meech Lake Accord travesty rammed through by a committee of provincial premiers and the prime minister against Canadian women, Canadian natives, the aspirations of the autonomous French nation of Canada and of the people of the Territories.

NDP MP Margaret Mitchell braved the jibes and hoots of Tory male members in the House in her fight against rampant sexual attacks and the battering of wives. NDP MPP Marion Bryden consistently worked on pay equity to narrow the ever-widening wage gap between men's and women' wages in a society that tends to lower all workers' real wages. NDP MPP Ruth Grier continues to fight for clean air and water, affordable housing and better plant closure laws to protect workers and their families while NDP MP Lynn MacDonald carries the struggle for fair taxation for workers, the poor and especially women -- no free income tax rides for corporate welfare bums.

One third of all NDP nominated candidates in British Columbia are women who are fighting the Conservatives and Liberals. The 84 NDP nominated women in Canada for this key 1988 election will fight with you for your Canada, more than the Canada envisioned by the Tories and Liberals. You can trust the NDP to continue to be in the vanguard for social change because it is the political spearhead of the women's groups and of the labor movement. The NDP is fighting for Canadian sovereignty for working Canadians, universal access to affordable daycare, for indexed pensions, for universal access to medicare, for reproductive rights, for constitutional rights for women and natives. NDP convention policy commits its parliamentary representatives to move to amend the Meech Lake Accord so that once again the federal government will ensure uniformity on Canadian social programs. Vote for equality for yourself, your mate, Canadian sons and daughters. Vote NDP! Vote for NDP women only!

Left Caucus challenge to NDP fed. council

By Ross Dowson
St. George-St. David

Although the edge has been taken off the longstanding threat of humankind's nuclear destruction, the danger of war remains the major challenge before the world's peoples. Developments in the Soviet areas stand in startling contradiction to the arms build up elsewhere across the globe, including here in Canada.

In 1969 the delegates at the federal NDP convention adopted a position that Canada should withdraw from membership in the U.S. State Department-dominated "cold war" NATO/NORAD military alliances. Ever since then the party leadership, when not attempting to pass resolutions such as it did at the 1983 and again at the 1985 convention that would reverse the party's stand, have publicly declared their opposition to official party policy. This crude display of opportunism, instead of molifying has only served to embolden such avowed enemies of the party as the National Citizen's Coalition as well as many self-professed "friends" who urge the NDP to go all the way and in particular to line up into a coalition behind the Liberals on the free trade issue.

Nothing to do but cripple the Party to fit the shoe!

Having failed to rescind the party's official position, and heading into the federal election where this position would be under heavy fire, this past spring, in apparent desperation, the leadership resorted to a process in crude violation of its most vaunted democratic principles. It assigned the International Affairs Committee the task of preparing a new statement to go before the federal Council entitled Canada's Stake in Common Security. While it is a double-talking hedging document, its function is clear -- to rid the party leadership of the embarrassing positions persistently defended by the party membership.

Whereas NDP policy conventions have been unequivocal in their rejection of NORAD, the new report states that "we will negotiate a new air defence alliance with the U.S. to replace NORAD..." With regards to NATO it relegates the decision to withdraw to an indefinite future and then only with the agreement of its NATO partners with whom it will continue to collaborate.

This backsliding was embarrassingly obvious when

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Alberta Lubicon establish rights

By Bill Clinton
Oriole

The Lubicon Indian Nation's declaration of independence on October 15 brought Canada's role as a prison-house of peoples sharply into focus. The Lubicon announced their withdrawal from the system that required almost nine years of trying to work through the Canadian courts for a settlement of their land claim. Then they began enforcing their rights as a sovereign nation in northern Alberta.

The Lubicon proceeded to blockade five roadways into their reservation and to enforce their new Lubicon Indian Nation Constitution. In this document the Lubicon claimed ownership of a reserve of 225 square kilometres and all resources on it. The constitution further called for the establishment of a native police force and a court, and asserted the right of the Council of the Lubicon Nation to make laws -- laws that must be approved by the community at general meetings.

Lubicon Chief Bernard Ominayak was careful to point out that the blockades were aimed at the roughly 100 oil companies that maintain some 400 wells on Lubicon land. While the public were free to travel at will through the area, the oil companies were required to purchase a mineral surface lease, a road access permit, and an oil well operating licence. Companies would also be required to pay area trappers $540 per square running kilometre for any drilling lines that intersect traplines. None of the oil companies paid the fees, and the biggest of them, Norcen, declared that it was closing down its 50 wells.

When the Lubicon gave notice to the Alberta government to negotiate before the blockades went up, Alberta Premier Don Getty cynically announced that he was unwilling to negotiate further: "My firm position is that I will never be able to negotiate with anyone who is breaking the law. "

Ominayak replied that no laws had been broken, as the Lubicons had never signed any treaty with either Ottawa or Alberta nor sold their land. Ominayak had said that the Lubicons "hope that we don't have to go that way (the barricades), but we have waited 48 years for a settlement. We have to have something very substantial and I think the Premier understands that."

Ominayak pointed out that Treaty 8 of 1899 allotted reservations to other northern Alberta bands but that, never having signed any treaty, the Lubicons had the right to secede from Canada. But the Tory government in Ottawa -- undeterred by United Nations resolutions which recognize the band's claim and which demand that harassment of the Lubicons cease -- continued to treat the band as a bunch of wayward children. The government hypocritically claimed that, since the band members had been the recipients of basic social services and had received a federal grant some time ago, they could not withdraw from Canada. Ottawa also refused to accept as Lubicon some of the approximately 450 people the band were claiming as members. The Council of the Lubicon Nation informed Ottawa that only it could govern the band's membership.

Ultimately, the Lubicon won most of their demands. The Alberta government conceded to them 204.5 square kilometres of land, and although the RCMP were sent in to dismantle the barricades , there was no violence, largely due to the quality of leadership that Ominayak and others exercised. Nonetheless, a few people were arrested, charged with contempt of court and released.

Undoubtedly, the depth of the support shown for the Lubicon was decisive in determining the outcome of the struggle. Representatives of various churches joined with socialists and trade unionists from different areas of Canada at the blockades. Members of the Six Nations reserve at Brantford Ontario barricaded Highway 54, stopped and redirected traffic for 17 hours.

This victory for native rights constitutes a breakthrough in the struggle for self-determination and has given a new lift to a protracted fight by all of Canada's native peoples. Already BC's native leaders have begun to establish the first-ever united front, the First Nations Congress, of all Indians in the province to advance aboriginal rights. This congress saw 250 native leaders from 121 bands, 22 tribal councils and 15 organizations at its inaugural meeting in late October.

The Draft Manifesto of the Ontario NDP Left Caucus of 1983 contains a proposed platform that, if adopted, would commit the NDP to support for the right of self-determination for the native peoples and the Quebecois. For socialists, and for any labor party, this is the only principled stand.

INNU protest air base

Continued from page 1

rently trying to woo.

The Innu number 10,000. But to Beatty and the federal government, they are clearly nothing more than minor obstacles to turning Labrador into a NATO base,

While Defence Minister Perrin Beatty is lobbying NATO for more help in building the base, and working towards a bigger role for Canada in NATO, the Innu point out that their children are scared by the flights, with pilots flying as low as 100 feet above ground (often low enough to hit the tops of trees) and that the current rate of 30 flights per day has scared away the local caribou, an essential part of the band's economy and food supply. In selling the idea of the base to NATO, Beatty claimed that the area was "a wilderness free of human habitation". The Innu number 10,000. But to Beatty and the federal government, they are clearly nothing more than minor obstacles to turning Labrador into a NATO base, as they have done with Cruise Missile tests in northern Alberta.

The plight of the Innu shows government disregard toward aboriginal rights and the environment while illuminating the nature of NATO. Canada's land and wildlife are being violated , our native people are being assaulted and imprisoned and our airspace is used to prepare professional killers to fight a third world war. The NDP, armed with a consistently anti-war socialist program, should intervene with a call forunilateral withdrawal from NATO and NORAD, pointing the way forward to an independent foreign policy. The NDP leadership have the responsibility to project a Canada that would make a positive contribution to world peace while respecting and defending the native people and protecting our environment.

Kuerti campaign is model for NDP

By Gord Doctorow
Oriole

One of the bright spots in the NDP election campaign is Don Valley North's NDP candidate, Anton Kuerti. Best known as Canada's premier concert pianist, he has also distinguished himself as an antiwar activist. He was a founder of the University of Toronto's Faculty Committee to End the War in Vietnam in the late 60's. He is also passionately opposed to the U.S. war drive and counterposes defence of the environment from the ravages of the corporate polluters against the so-called defence programs of the corporate capitalist parties.

"I am running for the NDP because it really is different from the other parties. We are not controlled by big corporate interests. We represent people of all types, but especially working people, minorities, women, the dispossessed ...."

In this election campaign, Kuerti has chosen to take the NATO issue head-on. He unequivocally advocates withdrawal for Canada. He also takes a clear stand against the so-called free trade plans of the Tories. His attacks against the corporate polluters are tough: he advocates criminal prosecution of those responsible for reckless acts against the environment. All this is outlined in a very full programmatic leaflet.

The pro-working class edge of his campaign is stated in his reasons for choosing to run for the NDP: "I am running for the NDP because it really is different from the other parties. We are not controlled by big corporate interests. We represent people of all types, but especially working people, minorities, women, the dispossessed ...."

In addition to this leaflet, Kuerti has produced a cassette for widespread distribution. Side 1 contains an introduction by Stephen Lewis, who provides a brief biographical note, followed by a speech of some 20 minutes by Kuerti, where he takes time to develop his platform in a full way. Side 2 has a sample of his music, a Mendelssohn concerto. Five thousand cassettes have been produced for cnavassers' distribution.

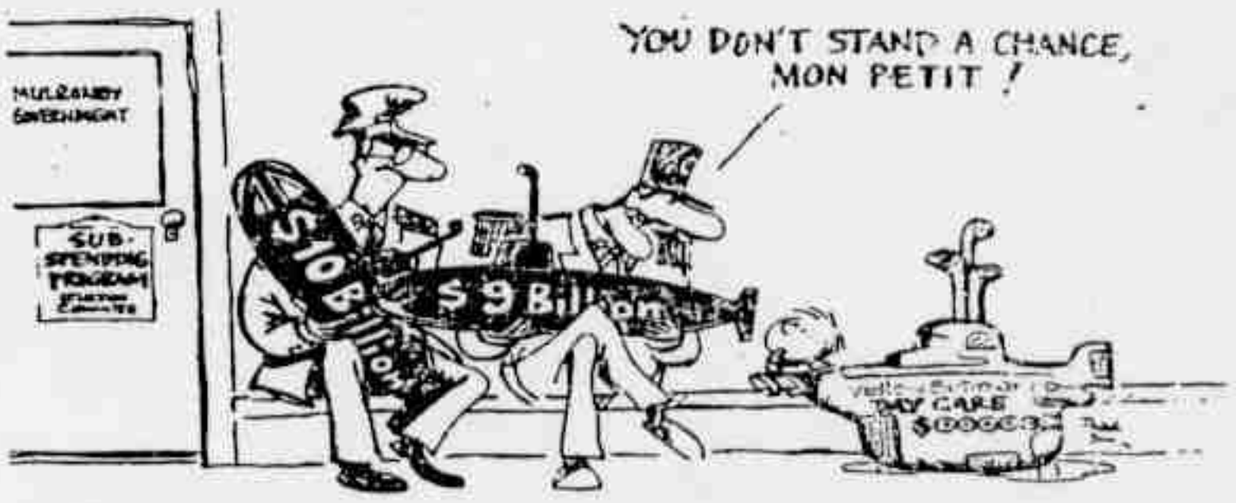
Kuerti explains that he sees an important parallel between his role as an artist and his intended role as a politician -- the improvement of society. He states that the urgency of imminent nuclear destruction and catastrophic ecological damage have moved him to put himself forward politically.

He identifies himself with the working people of Canada in his opposition to free trade. For example, he argues that Mulroney's deal may result "in the reduction of our already too low minimum wage" and jeopardize our unemployment insurance programs. He sees the corporations blackmailing workers with threats of factory relocations south if the workers are unwilling to relinquish their hard-won benefits. He concludes his arguments against free trade with an alternative vision of Canada: "Now Canada can and should compete with the United States, but I ask you -- 'Do you want to compete only as to who can produce the most material goods at the lowest cost regardless of wages, benefits, working conditions, environmental impact and cultural concerns?' Or should we not rather compete as to who can create the most caring, healthy and enlightened society, one which can help all its members, and not just the privileged ones, meet their needs and realize their hopes?"

"Do you want to compete only as to who can produce the most material goods at the lowest cost regardless of wages, benefits, working conditions, environmental impact and cultural concerns? Or should we not rather compete as to who can help all its members, and not just the privileged ones, meet their needs and realize their hopes?"

In the lengthy section devoted to opposing the arms drive, Kuerti calls for an end to Canadian collaboration with Star Wars, an end to the Liberal-initiated cruise missile testing, scrapping of nuclear subs in favor of reallocating funds for important social programs like childcare. He explains why NATO is in reality an aggressive military alliance which imperils the world and suggests means by which Canadian withdrawal should take place.

The Kuerti campaign has generated a lot of excitement with its clarity of purpose and its left character. It demonstrates that despite the backsliding of the NDP leadership, the party continues to attract serious left-wingers. After all, the NDP is the only mass labor party in Canada and offers the only alternative to U.S. imperialism's grip on Canada.



Party must turn left

Continued from page 2

cial protest of Natives and women are increasing and the electorate is seeking a vision of a Canada to face the uncertainty of the post-stock market crisis period? Or will we end up being too indistinguishable from the Liberals on free trade and foreign policy to be relevant, too muted to be heard and too opportunist to be trusted?

Broadbent's resistance to recognizing the reality of the NDP's drifting has undercut electoral prospects in ridings where the protest vote and anti-free trade vote will shift to the Liberals. The NDP leadership has failed to meet the major challenges of the election. We must exert every effort to win labor to power in the most important election in decades.

Letter defends anti-NATO policy

Continued from page 3

Broadbent retreated before Liberal leader John Turner's pro-NATO attack in one of the leaders' debates. Broadbent affirmed what the Left Caucus had suspected: that an NDP government led by Broadbent would not presume to withdraw from NATO "unilaterally", i.e. without the consent of NATO in order to maintain stability (read the status quo). Ironically the relegation of the NDP's position to withdraw Canada from NATO to "some time in the future" has gravely hurt the NDP's electoral prospects, leaving it vunerable to continus charges of the crassest electorial opportunism.

Since the Federal Council report all the normal channels of the party have been blocked by preparations to fight and win the election. But the Left Caucus decided in the interests of the party that it dare not remain silent. Its steering committee met in June to discuss and endorse a statement re-affirming previous NATO/NORAD opposition and in particular condemning the Federal Council's new statement committing the party to support of a major expansion of Canada's military budget. It decided to alert the party ranks by circulating its open letter to the Federal Council along with a petition form for getting additional signatures in support of this protest. Copies of the Left Caucus Open Letter can be obtained by sending in a request to the ONDP Left Caucus Bulletin. Whichever way the election goes this remains unfinished business before the party.

Readers' responses to L.C. Open Letter

Key NDP candidate nomination meetings in the Toronto area were distributed with copies of the Left Caucus statement in response to the federal NDP leadership's *Canada's Stake in Common Security*.. Copies were circulated to the political contingent in the Toronto Labour Day parade and signed petition sheets were gathered . Out-of-town mailings received a welcome response, not only in the return of more than a dozen signed petitions but expressions of solidarity with our action.

A Queen's University student expressed strong disagreement with the Federal Council position, declared himself to be a convinced socialist and expressed a desire to become involved in Left Caucus activity. A Manitobia recipient seized the opportunity to tell us that "the major problem with the NDP is its weak 'social democratic' babbling. Bring back Rosemary Brown who spoke for socialism!", he told us. "I will watch for a strong position in favour of the Palestinians."

We also received letters of solidarity from activists in the environment movement and in the anti-war movement such as ACT for Disarmament. Several correspondents included copies of statements they have made at conferences of such gatherings. And on top of all those good things we received a $20 cheque from a longstanding supporter.

British Labour Party upholds unilateralism

By a majority of over a million votes, the delegates to last month's convention of the British Labour Party once again repelled the Kinnock leadership's efforts to rid the party of its unilateral position on nuclear arms.

They reaffirmed the party's position that, a future Labour government will divest itself of all nuclear arms and shut down the nuclear bases that the U.S., with the agreement of the Thatcher government, has imposed on British soil.

The delegates burst into cheers when constituency activists reminded the conference that Britain was spending "enough money to fry the people in Russia while the people in this country are dying of hypothermia."

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Left Caucus newsletter

ONDP Left Caucus
Station M, Box 107
Toronto, Ontario M6S 4T2

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1988

Open Letter to NDP Federal Council From Fellow New Democrats Concerning Federal Council Policy on NATO/NORAD and Defence

The adoption by the Federal Council of the Report of the NDP's International Affairs Committee (April, 1988) titled Canada's Stake in Common Security has called into question the NDP's long-standing tradition as the antiwar party of Canada.

The document states that "notice of Canada's intention to withdraw from NATO will be given in a subsequent term of New Democratic Party government" (page 54), thereby relegating this policy decision to an indefinite future. How indefinite this is is suggested by the evasive language of the document: "This policy (withdrawal from NATO) will be implemented **in full consultation with Canada's NATO partners throughout the process and be sensitive to the need to avoid destabilisation and to show flexibility in international relations.**" (page 52, emphasis added).

Simply put, this means an NDP government will withdraw from NATO when the NATO "partners" let us, all the while that we would be attempting to wrest some reforms. In reality, the document is a sustained reform-NATO position. The formal mention of words suggesting withdrawal is a token concession to party policy adopted by conventions.

Calling this strategy part of its "short term plans" and an example of the NDP's "openness and flexibility", the report sees Canada's role as attempting to reverse NATO's first-strike policy and advocating "a non-offensive defence posture" by participating in NATO's military councils.

The membership of our party have had full discussions in the past affirming our position for withdrawal from NATO. It was initially adopted at the 1969 federal convention. In 1983, a challenge to overturn the policy was rebuffed by the delegates at the federal convention. And in 1985, after vigorous debates and consultations across the country, the position was confirmed once again against much the same proposals for reforming NATO that are detailed in the document. For the Federal Council to now present, in a camouflaged way, as its program for an NDP government the same position defeated in 1985 is a betrayal of the uncompromising peace position of party activists and of party democracy.

The Party must reassert its opposition to military alliances by jettisoning illusions that NATO is a democratic forum capable of reform from within rather than the expression of U.S. imperialism.

The Report also projects the idea of some kind of new alliance with the U.S. to replace NORAD: "We will negotiate **a new air defence agreement** with the United States, to replace the NORAD agreement that runs until 1991." (page 54). NDP policy conventions have been unequivocal in their rejection of NORAD and any other military alliance with the U.S. By what mandate does the Federal Council set forth such a departure from the expressed wishes of the membership?

Worse yet, the Report calls for an extensive buildup of conventional military forces on the one hand. Yet, on the other, it clearly states that Canada is threatened by no one. Astonishingly, the Report asserts that an NDP government "will implement a modernized defence production program for Canadian defence needs and which will be integrated into the whole process of industrial planning and regional development" (page 38) although earlier in the text it calls for conversion for peacetime use.

The Report endorses the purchase of mine-sweepers, diesel submarines and other military equipment in a major expansion of Canada's military budget. Yet the document correctly points out that the only war that Canada will be involved in would be the final war -- a nuclear war. Still the document proclaims that "New Democrats are committed to the defence of Can-

ada", despite its recognition that Canada is not militarily threatened.

The strategy of security through military alliances with the U.S. makes Canada part of the problem instead of part of the solution. It has been the unaligned nations in the world and the realization by hundreds of millions people that nuclear arms imperil the world that has forced a reduction in intermediate nuclear missile arsenals. Canada's place should be beside New Zealand which has said no to the aggressive U S military policies.

The INF agreement has allowed humanity to think that nuclear war is no longer a certainty and is avoidable. The peoples of the world must surely be heartened by the Soviet Union's proposals for further weapons cuts, including conventional arsenals, and its withdrawal from Afghanistan.

The NDP must hold up the antiwar vision of the CCF by advocating a world of security and peace through social justice, not through arms production. CCF founder-leader J.S. Woodsworth argued against Canadian citizens making profits out of supply war munitions -- the very opposite of the Report's defence spending recommendations which would create a huge military-industrial complex. Woodsworth's 1937 motion to the House of Commons stated that the Canadian government would make every effort to discover and remove the causes of international friction and social injustice.

The socialist view of war is that it is fundamentally driven by capitalism's desire to extend the field for profits. Socialism counterposes the alternative of a cooperative commonwealth based on production for use to satisfy the real social needs of the people. It is here that the Report reveals its greatest failing by establishing a military defence priority which must surely undermine necessary social spending to meet real needs.

Instead the NDP should oppose any increases in military expenditures in the House of Commons. It should seek to reduce such expenditures while redirecting priorities to establish adequate search and rescue craft, equipment and personnel as well as to independent coastal and atmospheric surveillance.

We, the undersigned, recommend the following changes to the Federal Council Report:

* It must be clearly stated that ar NDP government would refuse to participate in the military councils of NATO and that such a government would move to immediately and unconditionally withdraw from NATO.

* It must be clearly stated that an NDP government would withdraw from NORAD and would refuse to negotiate any replacement miltary alliance with the United States.

Initiated by the Ontario NDP Left Caucus Steering Committee in June, 1988.

Jim Anderson
Lois Bedard
Esther Bissoon
Bill Clinton
Gord Doctorow
Brenda Dolling
Harry Kopyto
Diane Meaghan
Manfred Netzel
Steve Shorter
Jan Sindrey
Jeff Smith
Lois Stuart

If you would like to assist in supporting this open letter, why not photocopy and circulate it among NDP members in your riding associations and among federal party candidates' The accompanying page has space for signatures. We ask that you collect as many signatures as you can and that you mail them back to the address of the Ontario NDP Left Caucus (stated below) so that we can collect them as a batch to be forwarded to the NDP Federal Council. In addition we would be most pleased to receive financial contributions in the name of the ONDP Left Caucus in order to help defray the cost of this campaign.

ONDP Left Caucus
Station M, Box 107
Toronto, Ontario
M6S 4T2

W12-LCN-1988-Nov V2N4-9

Open Letter to NDP Federal Council From Fellow New Democrats Concerning Federal Council Policy on NATO/NORAD and Defence

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Signature	Printed Name	Address	Date
L. E. Sweet	L. E. Sweet	212 Fraser, Selkirk Manitoba R1A 0P7	13 Aug 1988
Fran Frederiksen	FRAN FREDERIKSEN	BOX 1243, STONEWALL	18 Aug, 1988

Please forward these signatures to:

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